

AI
PR
M.

THE

PRAISE OF WATER;

A

PRIZE POEM.

—
BY JOHN McPHERSON.
—

HALIFAX:

**PUBLISHED FOR THE EDITOR OF THE OLIVE BRANCH,
By J. H. CROSSKILL & CO.**

—
MDCCCXLIII.

AK
PR
M87.

[2]

For Sale in HALIFAX, by Messrs. A. & W. McKINLAY,
C. MacKENZIE & Co., A. W. GODFREY and BESMONETT &
BROWN.

LIVERPOOL, Mr. GEORGE PAYZANT.

WINDSOR, Mr. NATHAN HARRIS.

CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. I., Messrs. COOPER & BREM-
NER.

PRICE FOUR PENCE.

PRINTED AT THE MORNING POST OFFICE.

KINLAY,
ONETT &

BREN-

TO THE

OFFICE-BEARERS AND MEMBERS

OF THE

HALIFAX TEMPERANCE SOCIETY,

THIS POEM

IS INSCRIBED,

IN THE FERVENT HOPE THAT IT WILL PROVE SUBSERVIENT
TO THE CAUSE OF TEMPERANCE,

BY THEIR VERY OBEDIENT,

AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE

THE

OF THE

THE

IN

IN THE

TO THE

IN THE

AND

THE

THE PRAISE OF WATER.

PART I.

THE spirit tortured from the vine
Creates insatiate desire ;
But water, Nature's choice and mine,
Cools, quenches thirst's consuming fire.

2

This, fresh from Heaven's creative hand,
Descends profusely from the sky,
To fertilize the barren land,
And yield the world a rich supply!

3

The native of the torrid zone,
The dweller in the Arctic drear,
Require this beverage alone,
And duly prize its simple cheer.

4

The traveller on the desert waste
Athirst and worn, imagines this
As grateful to his eager taste
As nectar to the sons of bliss.

5

They know not what it is to lack
One little moment's joy of breast ;
But he is taught that want's fierce rack
But heightens satisfaction's nest.

6.

The product of the fiery art
 Would mock him as the mirage there,
 Pour hot Siroccos on his heart,
 And drive him to untold despair.

7.

But one sweet draught from some lone spring,
 O'er which the cooling north wind blows,
 Would recompense his toil, and bring
 A kind oblivion of his woes.

8.

The warrior weary from the field,
 Where Freedom's battle hath been won,
 Would fainly quit his post, and yield
 To streams that laugh beneath the sun.

9.

So pants the heart for Judah's streams
 Rejoicing in their mountain course,
 So longs the pilgrim, tired of dreams,
 To drink at Joy's eternal source.

10.

The voyager on the pathless deep
 Enduring shipwreck's fearful ills,
 Is wild with his desire to steep
 His mad thirst in his native rills.

11.

Poor wretch!—by what fell demons bound—
 By what tormenting anguish wrung—
 With water, water all around,
 But not a drop to cool his tongue!

12.

Kind Heaven! amend his piteous case
 With timely showers, with breezes bland,
 And waft him to a succouring race,
 His native shore and household band.

PART II.

Ah! water is a precious boon;
For Nature so requires its kiss
That morning cannot wait for noon,
Nor noon for night to share its bliss.

2.

A precious boon to man and beast,
Fowl, insect, every form of life;
Still heightening Plenty's luscious feast,
Or lessening Famine's fearful strife.

3.

It yields whatever thirsts, a dower
Of exquisite enjoyment—yields
Fresh beauty to the rich man's bower,—
Fresh vigour to the poor man's fields.

4.

The poor man hath a king's delight,
When Heaven descends in genial rain,
To call his labours into sight,
And bless him in his waving grain.

5.

Our own Acadia's emblem dear,
Spring's earliest gift to merry May,
Receives full many an April tear,
Before it blooms beside our way.

6.

Acadia, country of my birth,
Thy streams may not be known to Fame,
But those who love thee feel thy worth
In all that human hearts can claim.

7.

Glad rivers course thy fertile vales,
Bright lakes refresh thy verdant hills,
Brooks sing to brooks along thy dales,
Where cool springs foster rippling rills.

THE PRAISE OF WATER.

8.

We lack not water—but we thirst
 For those sweet streams that fill the mind—
 For that deep Fount ordained to burst
 The mental yearnings of mankind.

9.

Ah ! knowledge is a precious boon ;
 For Thought, our Angel, has desires
 Which cannot be supplied too soon
 With that which feeds her glorious fire.

PART III.

Pure Water !—even the name is bliss !
 Ianthe, bring the draught I crave,
 That I may catch its smile, and kiss
 The cooling chrystal of its wave.

2.

What marvel that the Hebrew Chief
 Who felt strong thirst's constraining spell,
 And sought kind nature's sweet relief,
 Desired it fresh from Bethlehem's well.

3.

What marvel that the sick man sighs
 To taste the dear, delicious draught,
 Which Love, even while she weeps, denies,
 Lest death, instead of hope, be quaffed.

4.

Cold water hath a calm controul—
 A sense of good without alloy ;
 Cold water to a thirsty soul
 Is life renewed, and winged with joy.

5.

The minstrel loves its peaceful sway,
 For it has virtues which inspire
 The grateful laudatory lay
 That now employs his youthful lyre.

6.

He loves it for its heavenly birth,
Its likeness to immortal youth,
Its great, though unpresuming worth,
Its innate and essential truth.

7.

O Brethren, when its simple cheer
Incites the weary heart to sing,
Glad thought should seek her native sphere,
And drink at pleasure's primal Spring.

8.

Pure precious gift, who hath not seen
Its glory in the rainbow's hues,
And in the sparkling diamond sheen
Refracted from a thousand dews !

9.

It takes unnumbered, wondrous forms—
Now floats in mist along the vale—
Now soars in clouds—now falls in storms—
Of rain, and snow, and sleet, and hail.

10.

Now, forced by man's arch-agent fire,
It rises into giant Steam,
Takes mighty wings that never tire,
And measures distance as a dream.

PART IV.

How sweet to bathe the burning cheek,
And cool the fever of the brain,
In some glad stream that seems to speak
Of buoyant health to every vein !

2.

How sweet to see it glance along
In sunlit radiance to its rest,
To listen to its murmured song
When eve is mirrored on its breast :—

3.

To stray with Beauty where it strays
 Charmed by the voice of Rapture's Dove,
 And mark her blue orbs glad with rays
 That own the power of first, fond Love.

4.

The drunkard cannot prize its kiss,
 Its pleasant smile—its cheerful song;
 For sinless nature veils her bliss
 From him that works his spirit wrong.

5.

He, lost to life's inherent zest—
 To Beauty's away, to Rapture's tone,
 Defies her efforts to invest
 His heart with that which moves her own.

6.

He boasts the privilege to be—
 But, ah! respires but to destroy;
 For but the virtuous and the free
 Can touch the talisman of joy.

7.

He hears no passing angel's wings—
 No voice up-breathing from the sod,—
 He looks not on created things
 As features of All-glorious God!

8.

His is the "brute unconscious gaze"
 The swine-like wallowing in the mire—
 The vitiation which obeys
 The tyrant call of low desire.

9.

Can he fulfil a spirit's lot—
 He represent the Eternal Mind?
 He is himself a moral blot—
 The shame and sorrow of his kind!

10.

The charities that banish strife—
 The smiles that bid unrest depart—
 The harmonies of loving life—
 Possess no hold upon his heart.

11.

His kindred!—must we raise the veil
 To let his fellow-men behold
 That mournful mother weak and pale,
 Those children hungry—ragged—cold?

12.

O who can tell the weary strife—
 The hopeless conflict with despair—
 The burthen of the death in life—
 Which they, the unprotected, bear!

13.

Sweet Mercy!—would that they were free
 From that mad being's tyrant sway:
 More widowed than a widow she—
 More orphaned than if orphans they.

14.

Wronged woman! thou mayst waste and die
 The victim of a broken trust!
 Wronged offspring! ye may vainly sigh
 To prove a father fond and just!

15.

His step was music that was dear,
 When he was kind and hope was high;
 But now ye shrink from it in fear,
 And dread to meet his "evil eye."

16.

But, ah! how changed his human voice—
 How chill and strange its warmest tone!
 Besotted wretch! is this thy choice—
 This dark transforming act thine own?

17.

I need not ask—for truth hast said
That Hell, how black soe'er its will,
Contains no demon half so dread,
Or half so capable of ill.

18.

The minstrel, having sung thus far,
Would fainly leave the drunkard here,
Were he not found a baleful star
To all that breathe within his sphere.

19.

Our song would grow prolix to tell
How his example spreads his vice;
His followers know its power too well—
Their dark experience should suffice.

20.

The temperate would conclude that none
Could countenance so vile a course,
Because his reason bids him shun
Its specious wiles and syren force.

21.

But as the sinful were the pure,
And but the free can bow to thrall,
Let those that think themselves secure,
Regard their standing lest they fall.

22.

For ah! the Circe of the bowl
Beguiles in so occult a way,
That men are fast in her controul
Ere hardly conscious of her sway.

23.

Enough:—return we to the curse
With which the drunkard blasts his own;
To subjects painful to rehearse—
To ill-deplored wherever known.

24.

The drunkard is a baleful star
To all that breathe within his sphere;
He lives for nothing but to mar
Whatever love considers dear.

25.

He aggravates his mother's cares,
And mocks affection's fondest trust;
He brings his father's hoary hairs
In silent sorrow to the dust.

26.

His brothers, loved in life's young day,
Confess not now his birthright ties,
But pass him in the public way
With burning cheeks and tearful eyes.

27.

His sisters—utter not the name
Which they, the good must blush to hear;
It has become a word of shame
To all to whom it should be dear.

28.

His friends—the drunkard has no friends—
Such cannot breathe in tainted air:
Howe'er his course began, it tends
To isolation, doubt, despair.

29.

Poor erring man! who would not weep
To see him quaff the infernal spell
That wings him downward to the steep
That trembles o'er the brink of Hell!

30.

Who would not fly with timely haste
To stop him in his strange career,
And bring him back to be replaced
In life and love's protecting sphere!

THE PRAISE OF WATER.

31.

O Friends! O Christians! having shown
 That fearing God, ye love your kind
 Restore the drunkard to his own—
 Restored him to the man—the mind.

32.

God spares him that he may repent—
 That ye may take him by the hand,
 And woo him from his evil bent
 To strengthen Virtue's happy band.

33.

Go seek him when the fiend has fled—
 When Reason reasserts her sway,
 That ye may raise him from the dead
 To walk in Wisdom's pleasant way.

34.

Go bid him hope—he needs your aid
 Your effort to support your own—
 Yet bear him to his God, afraid
 To trust to human means alone.

35.

So shall ye save a soul from death
 And hide a multitude of sins—
 So win the zeal-sustaining breath
 Of that high praise that still begins.

36.

Pleased heaven shall shed her gentle light,
 In peaceful halos round your heads—
 And angel-guardians of the night
 Bring sweetest sleep to bless your beds.

37.

Whilst where the savage drunkard frowned,
 And Famine waved his vulture wing,
 Contenting Plenty shall be found,
 And those that sorrowed learn to sing.

38.

His wife, who watched for him in fear,
 While anguish gnawed her matron breast,
 Shall smile beside her evening cheer,
 And welcome home her husband guest.

39.

His little ones shall run to greet
 The father they were taught to flee,
 Inspire him with endearments sweet,
 And prattle on his parent knee.

40.

His hoary sire shall bless his son—
 His mother clasp her blessed boy—
 His sire's pleased household every one,
 And even the stranger share the joy.

PART V.

Pure Water, who so cold of heart
 As not to crave the gentle spell—
 The peaceful pulse which thou canst start
 In human feeling's gushing well.

2.

What makes that maiden brow so bright,
 Those lips and cheeks so sweetly fair?
 What fills those eyes with joyous light?
 Pure water—temperance—sun and air.

3.

Pure water! were the world confined
 To thy sweet influence alone,
 What ills would cease to vex mankind—
 What powers of darkness be o'erthrown!

4.

Pure water! I would turn from wine
 With all its fabled dream of bliss,
 To prove the enjoyment half divine
 That greets thy lovers in thy kiss.

5.

Pure water! I rejoice to hear
 Thy low sweet murmurs in my dreams,
 For they have wings with which I near
 The music of the Eternal streams.

6.

Twice, man, when thou didst fail to find
 This blessing which was made so free,
 The bounteous All-providing MIND
 Directed it to come to thee.

7.

When Hagar watched her famished child,
 An angel showed a fountain nigh;
 When Israel thirsted in the wild,
 A rock gave out the sweet supply.

8.

But miracles as great as these
 Are constantly around us wrought,
 And good provided for our ease
 By ways for which we take not thought.

9.

For He, who gave the soul her dower,
 And taught her to revere her trust,
 Creates new mercies every hour—
 New forms of life from slumbering dust.

10.

The rock still changes to a spring—
 The desert still has bread and quails,—
 The living still look up and sing,
 Because his goodness never fails.

11.

Then, why abuse His gifts, and toil
 To work ourselves and others ill;
 Enough the bounty of the soil
 The largess of the crystal rill.



